

TRANSCRIPT

Massage therapy meets the health-conscious consumer

Podcast interview with Jenn Napolitano, Clinic Manager for Massage Envy; and Janelle Kozyra, member of Kimco Realty's blogging team

Janelle: Greetings, everyone, I'm Janelle Kozyra, a member of Kimco's blogging team. Today I am joined by a Kimco tenant, the Clinic Manager of Massage Envy in River Hill Village Center in Clarksville, Md., Jenn Napolitano. Hi Jenn, it's good to have you with us.

Jenn: Hi, it's good to be here.

Janelle: So Jenn, you're the Clinic Manager at the Massage Envy location in Clarksville, Md., and just for some background for our listeners out there, Massage Envy is the largest massage therapy franchise in its industry. There are nearly 800 locations now in 45 states, so the location in River Hill Village Center is one of them. So tell us, Jenn, what sorts of services do you offer at Massage Envy there?

Jenn: We offer customers massages and healthy skin facials. Our massages are the not one-size-fits-all protocol that you find at some spas, but they're actually customized, each one individually, to fit a specific member or guest's needs. So some of what goes into customizing massages are a couple of different modalities. We offer Swedish deep tissue, cranial sacral. Each therapist uses the techniques appropriate to achieve the results based on each client's needs.

We do also offer the Murad healthy skin facials. That's for different skin types. And we're partners with Dr. Murad. He's a global skin care leader and world-renowned and highly respected pharmacist and dermatologist. So that is the other service that we offer in addition to the massage.

Janelle: What would you say are some factors that differentiate Massage Envy from other massage therapy locations out there?

Jenn: I would say making massage accessible, convenient, and affordable is one of the big things that differentiates us from our competitors. We are also of course the largest single provider in the country, so that's a big difference. Wherever you are, you're liable to find a Massage Envy nearby. And we really focus more on the health side of it, as far as our services are concerned. Very interested in the effects of regular therapeutic massage therapy as opposed to something that's just a luxury.

Janelle: What do you think makes your location so successful?

Jenn: I think that it has a lot to do with our dedication, both from owners and management, to not just serve our customers and give them a really great experience, but to our employees as well. And one thing that has helped us to do is have long-term therapists. So we have people who have been with us since we began and so they've been with a lot of the same customers since we began as well, which helps create a relationship.

Every time you start seeing someone, whether they're your massage therapist or your aesthetician, you build a relationship and they get to know your body and what you're sort of trying to achieve, whether it's in your massage routine or with your skin care.

Janelle: What else do you think customers want most from their spa experience?

Jenn: Well, I think they want something that's going to be customizable to them, to their needs. Not a one-size-fits-all, everybody kind of gets the same protocol, but a caring staff that is going to pay attention to what's bringing them in. Is it stress? Is it relaxation? Do they have specific concerns? And then being able to formulate the treatment plan that is going to fit them and their needs.

Janelle: Have you seen this change over the time that you've been in the spa industry?

Jenn: Very much so, because I think, more and more, it's becoming less about luxury, a special treat. We still have that idea a little bit and people still do sort of do massage therapy that way and spa services in general.

But I think more and more people are starting to realize that it's something that's part of a health regimen. I think that there's an increasing awareness of the effects of the overall wellness that can be achieved through spa services, and it's going more and more out of the luxury and more and more into the health care field.

Janelle: Why do you think that is? What's driving that?

Jenn: Well there's tons of research going on. There's a Touch Research Institute. There are articles. I recently saw one in The Washington Post. I think with Massage Envy, and places that are more convenient and affordable, there's a lot of word of mouth as well—*I've been going to get massages. It really helps me. You should try it.*

I do think Massage Envy's been very much a leader in that sort of revolution. We call it the revolution of relaxation. But we're really bringing massage therapy out of that realm, and that's been, as a company, our goal. And part of that is making it convenient and affordable so that people can add it in to what they're already doing for their health.

I do think that there's also just been more interest in healthful lifestyle. That's just been a trend that's becoming more and more. Everyone wants to be healthy and do things that are good for them, and this is another way that people can add that into some things that they're already doing.

Janelle: So the spa experience is becoming more a part of a person's usual health regimen. Are there any other major trends that you've seen or you see hitting the spa industry lately?

Jenn: I think that it's becoming more accepted and something that people do more. I think that's also translated into it's becoming more of a gift that people give as well, whether it's for the holidays or a birthday or whatever the occasion may be. I think people are saying, you deserve this. You should go relax and treat yourself.

Some of the other trends that we've seen as far as additional services that are offered, there's been a lot of hot and cold therapies that have become popular. We offer a service like that called Deep Heat. Foot

treatments, which is something that we are getting ready to announce at the end of the month. We'll be doing a sugar foot scrub. So those are a couple of trends as far as different or additional services offered.

Janelle: What's your outlook on the industry for 2013?

Jenn: I think there's new growth for spas and more demand for the consumer. Like I said, I think that the awareness in health in general and how that translates to massage is just going to continue to grow. And I think that's actually also turned into more of a demand for a career in massage therapy, we hope.

Janelle: And social media, I have to ask about this, because it's a big question that is on a lot of tenants' minds in recent years. When it comes to the massage and spa industry and Massage Envy in particular, how are you using social media to help boost your business and drive foot traffic to your location?

Jenn: Well, we're present on Facebook, Twitter, and Google Plus. We use it to share tips about health, whether they're necessarily massage-related or not just a way to keep people engaged on our page. We also share specials and promotions. So trying to keep people engaged with the different tips about healthy lifestyles, something for them to read and peruse and then with that, they can see some of our specials and promotions on there.

In addition to that, we are also active on Yelp. And I've found Yelp to be a very, very helpful tool because it allows you to communicate with customers. You know, we do have a way that we do that internally as far as customer feedback, but a lot of people are liable to just get on Yelp and make comments. We actually have the highest Yelp rating in our region, so we've gotten Best of Yelp for the past two years.

We very much pay attention to that and are active with Yelp as a company, and so we involve the customers that post on it. If there's anything that they have a problem with, we definitely want to know about it and be able to fix it. So I've found that in particular to be very helpful. And I've even had both clients and prospective employees say to me, I came to your location because I liked your Yelp review.

Janelle: Without giving away any trade secrets out there, what do you think the #1 thing is that all spas need to be doing in 2013 to be successful?

Jenn: Well I think with the focus on massage coming more out of the luxury and more towards the part of the health regimen, I think that convenience and affordability is the biggest thing. That's what's going to help create that repeat client, who's coming on a more regular basis, not just once a year.

And continuing to offer new service options. So you know, looking in line with things like aroma therapy and the Deep Heat, the sugar foot scrub that we offer, but just continuing to stay up on new things and what customers want.

And then I always think that the biggest thing is—and if you don't have this last thing, then all the other stuff doesn't matter—but dedication to outstanding customer service. Your clients aren't going to come back and see you, there's a million of options for them, if you're not treating them well and if they're not feeling really well taken care of. So that's always the most important thing to me.

Janelle: Great. Well thanks, Jenn, for taking some time out with us. We appreciate it.

Jenn: You're welcome. It was good talking to you.

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